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TRAINING TEACHER-LIBRARIANS IN NORMAL SCHOOLS

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Coöperation between libraries and schools in this country has practically gone through three phases of development: The installing of books in the schools; the bringing of the children to the libraries; and the placing of librarians in the school libraries.

There is no better way to follow this evolution than through the volumes of the *Library Journal*, of *Public Libraries*, and of the *Proceedings* of the N. E. A. The increasing number of pages given to the subject from year to year is in itself an indication of the growth of interest; while the recurrence annually of the names of certain men and women shows the patient persistence which aroused and fanned that interest.

Mr. Certain's report last year has probably done more than any one thing to bring to most librarians and schoolmen a realization of actual accomplishment and conditions in high school libraries. And in all these matters relating to school libraries, be they normal school, high school or rural school, we librarians must remember that school principals, superintendents, and boards of education are working with us to settle the problems which are of common interest.

When we read in the Certain report of the legal requirements which will become effective four years from now in eighteen of our states we are delighted. But do we even then fully understand what the demand is to be numerically? Do we realize just how many high school libraries there will be in even one of these eighteen states? That number must then be multiplied by eighteen.

Nor can we stop even there. Can we imagine that at the end of four years no other state will follow the eighteen? Do not our states copy progressive laws from one another?

Has there ever been a time when we

could so hopefully expect legal advance in education as at present, when so many of our men—our lawmakers and our budget makers—are returning from overseas with a new personal appreciation of the value of books and learning, and when the power to accomplish is about to be given to so many women who have always had the will?

Words and phrases inserted into some of the school and library laws this past year indicate that by 1923 probably more states will be added to Mr. Certain's original eighteen. We must think in terms of hundreds and of thousands when planning for the high school and other school libraries of the near future. 10,000 libraries! and 10,000 librarians! 10,000 trained librarians! Where are we to find them? Some of you have tried to hire trained librarians during the past two years, and you have found it no easy job.

At present the demand for librarians exceeds the supply, and the reinforcements sent out from the regular training schools are not encouraging from the standpoint of numbers. In reply to a questionnaire sent to twelve of our best known schools, I find that between 175 and 220 are to be graduated this spring. Even considering war conditions as a reason, this supply is very inadequate to fill the number of vacancies.

We must remember, also, that in supplying these school libraries one must consider not any trained librarian, but a trained librarian fitted to do school library work. One trained librarian differeth from another trained librarian in type of ability, even granting that each is a star.

But trained librarians our schools must have according to the law. If they cannot be found in sufficient numbers among those now in the profession, nor among those the training schools are now graduating, by some means more people must be found to go into the work, and, having been

found, must be given opportunity for training.

We turn to the catalog of the library schools, and read something like this, "The number admitted is limited" or "The size of the class is subject to the instructor's decision." With these printed statements before us, and with the memory of the physical conditions of the schools as so many of us know them, we are obliged to admit that the schools as they are now have no room for many added students. More students mean larger quarters, larger equipment, and more instructors. And all this means larger funds, and—in the case of more instructors—another hunt for men and women. All of which shows that to supply the present and apparent future need some means must be found to train more librarians, and more candidates must be found to train. We must either enlarge our existing schools, or add new schools or utilize other agencies.

The announcement of the new academic library course given under the auspices of the Carnegie Institute of Technology and the Carnegie Library School of Pittsburgh is one of the most welcome steps in progress.

Since this large demand for school librarians comes from school conditions, it seems very natural to turn to the school authorities to supply it. To find what normal schools and teachers' colleges are doing in library training, I sent out a questionnaire to many schools, east and west, north and south. One hundred and twenty-five busy people were kind enough to answer me. There proves to be a great lack of uniformity in usage even among the several normal schools of the same state.

Forty reported that they did nothing in the line of library training. Of these three wrote that they intended to do something in the future.

The library instruction in the other schools reporting was of three kinds:

1. Incidental instruction given in connection with other subjects, usually English and history, on the use of books on those subjects and on material to be found in the collection of that special school.

2. Definite training on the use of the school library and a few reference books and tools, to help the student personally. The time assigned to this type of training varies greatly, from one hour given to each entering class to a systematic credit course of some twenty lessons, with practical problems, assigned hours for the use of the library, and suggestions for making the course of use later on by the student in her own work with classes in the grades or in rural schools.

3. A few colleges and normal schools have definitely arranged courses for training teacher-librarians, which rank as the kindergarten or similar courses of the institution, carrying credit and receiving official recognition at the end.

These schools assign from 70 to 100 school periods to technical lectures, with from one to two periods for required preparation or laboratory work for each lecture period.

The programs in general include the following subjects—cataloging; classification; library economy; book selection and evaluation; use of reference books, indexes and library helps; mending, binding and care of books; lending of books; the equipment and administration of a school library; and how to teach pupils to make use of the library for study and pleasure. In some cases variations and additions are made for rural school libraries or for grade school libraries.

Besides these so-called technical subjects, each course includes many of the subjects carried by the other students in the regular course of the normal school. Emphasis is laid upon English and history, since in the smaller schools the librarian often gives part time to teaching one of these subjects.

In Wisconsin, always in the front rank in library affairs, the legal requirement for school librarians becomes effective this September. The Department of Public Instruction lists five colleges, beside the University of Wisconsin, and four normal schools, as giving library training courses. A statement of minimum requirements is issued, summer school courses are offered and a correspondence course is suggested. Other excellent courses are those given at

the State Normal School, Geneseo, New York, and at the State Normal School, Bridgewater, Massachusetts.

Many of the advantages of establishing a course for training librarians at a normal school are the same as those gained in the coöperation of any two similar kinds of work, e. g., lessening of expense because of the common use of one plant; possible broadening of the program by interdepartmental exchange of instructors; more academic and social life for the individual student.

In the case of the normal school there is also the lessening of expense to the student, since in most normal schools there is no tuition charged to students from the state and living expenses are not great. Moreover it is of great value to a teacher-librarian to understand the educational system of the state, and no place can be better than the normal school for such information. In addition the observation school furnishes abundant material for many kinds of laboratory practice.

Among the disadvantages of any union with another institution are the necessity of conforming to certain requirements of admission, length and sequence of class periods, value of courses, type of official recognition, etc.

It is sometimes argued that normal school courses must give so much time to the method of teaching the subject, that their value as cultural courses is lessened. With a teacher-librarian there is need of some training in method for her own class-

room use and to intelligently help the other teachers.

Outlining the program for a library school or class is a matter of elimination rather than of inclusion, since every subject may be needed at some time. Each normal school must outline its own program because of local conditions. Wisconsin's minimum requirement at least should be met, with as much English and history as possible.

The question of salary will, I trust, be discussed at another session. New York's new law, and the conditions reported from Detroit, are steps in the right direction.

We all want the best and broadest culture and training for our librarians, whatever position they may fill. But are we not sometimes confused? While certain fundamentals are necessary always, the same training does not invariably mean the best training for every person, and under every condition.

There is a place for the graduate school,—a place still unfilled—there is a place for the four-years course; for the two-years course; for the one-year course; for the summer course; and we are watching hopefully the Wisconsin correspondence course.

When librarians become certified, and training and experience can be expressed in terms we are all accustomed to use in measuring other professions; when school librarians are ranked and paid on the same scale as the teachers, we shall ourselves have a clearer understanding of the gradations in library requirements. And so will the world outside.